

Policy Primer
School Bus Anti-Idling
October 2006

Recent environmental studies have looked at the impact on diesel fumes, due to bus idling on children and adult health, and the results aren't good - especially if the individual suffers from asthma or allergies. As a result, a number of states have already passed anti-idling legislation. The legislation has been introduced in Iowa but has not yet passed. In an effort to improve Iowans' health and ward off a mandate, IASB is issuing a recommended anti-idling policy for boards to adopt. See Appendix A.

The policy should include why the board is adopting the policy and what the board expects the policy to accomplish. It doesn't really need much more detail than that. Regulations should be developed by the administration, with assistance with the Director of Transportation, ensuring manufacturers guidelines are being followed. Most manufacturers recommend a minimal amount of idling to start the buses except on extremely cold days.

The regulation should include

- When it's appropriate for buses to be idling;
- How long buses should idle or guidelines for drivers to follow so they know how long a bus should idle at certain instances;
- Bus maintenance to ensure the cleanest emissions possible;
- Whether the anti-idling policy applies to deliveries to the school as well as school vehicles;
- Whether bus schedules need to be reviewed, and how often, to minimize idling time; and,
- How bus drivers will be informed about the new policy and regulation and consequences for failure to comply.

The Environmental Protection Agency has this issue as a priority and has a number of resources on its web site. For further information, especially technical information, check out <http://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/antiidling.htm>.

Note: This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is furnished with the understanding that the Association is not engaged in rendering legal or other professional services. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

Copyright 2006-Iowa Association of School Boards

CHECK IT OUT: Whether you are revising or developing a new board policy, review your collective bargaining agreement, consider the traditions and beliefs of your school district and contact your school attorney before adopting it.

District Vehicle Idling

The board recognizes that it has a role in reducing environmental pollutants and in assisting students and others in being free from pollutants that may impact their respiratory health. Unnecessary vehicle idling emits pollutants and wastes fuel. The board directs the superintendent, in conjunction with the Director of Transportation, to work on administrative regulations to implement this policy and reduce school vehicle idling time.

Legal References: Iowa Code §279.8 (2005).

Cross References: 403 Employee Health and Well-Being
507 Student Health and Well-Being
711 Transportation

District Vehicle Idling

Employees will minimize idling time on all school vehicles, including cars and vans. The following regulations are to be followed unless the _____ (insert title – Director of Transportation, superintendent, etc.) _____ has given permission to an employee to alter from these regulations.

- When school bus drivers arrive at loading and unloading areas to drop off or pick up passengers, they will turn off their busses as soon as possible.
- The school bus should not be restarted until it is ready to depart and there is a clear path to exit the pick up/drop off area.
- School buses will not idle (on school grounds or off school grounds) for longer than ____ minutes unless:
 - They are waiting in traffic;
 - They are loading/unloading students with special needs;
 - There are safety or emergency situations;
 - There are maintenance or mechanical inspections or repair; or
 - There are extreme weather conditions (temperatures of less than 30 degrees Fahrenheit) and the purpose is to warm the interior of the bus.
- Transportation staff are directed to revise bus schedules so that school bus caravanning can be avoided and the cleanest buses are assigned to the longest routes.
- All district service or delivery vehicles shall turn off the engines after arriving to make deliveries to, or perform maintenance of, school buildings.

To the extent practicable, the principal will post “no idling” signs to alert drivers of district vehicles and other vehicles to turn off their vehicles when waiting or parking. A copy of this administrative regulation shall be posted in a prominent place in district facilities so that all transportation, delivery and maintenance staff can view them with ease. Vendors, who regularly deliver goods to the school district, will be notified of the regulation as well to ensure their compliance.

Employees who fail to comply with this policy will be subject to discipline including suspension and termination.